

**The City of Frederick, Maryland**  
**PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION**

**Minutes of February 16, 2011**

*(Approved April 20, 2011)*

Members Present: J. Myers, D. Rivera, J. Baldi, C. Meierhoefer, J. Grove, K. Wagester, C. Effland, R. Knight

Staff Present: R. Myers, K. Winterstein, Alderman M. O'Connor, Lt. Jason Keckler, Sgt. Wade Brown

Absent: M. Lawrence

Meeting called to order by Chairman J. Baldi at 7:00 p.m.

- 1. Review of the December 15, 2010 minutes:

*Motion* by J. Myers to approve the minutes as submitted

*2<sup>nd</sup>* by J. Grove

*All in favor.*

- 2. Request from the Frederick Arts Council to allow alcohol to be served and to waive fees for Carroll Creek Urban Park for the annual "Frederick Arts Festival" to be held on

June 4 & 5, 2011. Chairman Baldi recused himself from the discussion as he sits on the Board of the Frederick Arts Council. Mr. Shuan Butcher, Executive Director, offered that the Festival is in its 18<sup>th</sup> year and the 3<sup>rd</sup> year under the Arts Council. Past two years, have been a chance to request and receive support on both requests to serve alcohol and waive rental fees. All costs incurred by the Parks Division staff will continue to be paid for. In 2010, the event drew 20,000 people into the City over two days; also being one of the largest annual events in the community. Mr. Baldi commented as an Arts Council member that last year they did not charge admission to the event and will not charge again this year.

J. Grove stated that alcohol is a great fundraiser for the event. While the rental fees are needed to offset the cost to maintain the park, but sees this event as a good support of the community. In the past there is a booth that you can make reservations for dinner and/or lodging while at the event, so there is a direct economic benefit to the City itself.

C. Meierhoefer asked historically what we have done; R. Myers stated what he is asking for has been approved in previous years. In 2010, they took care of their own trash where the City did it in years prior and billed the Arts Council. The fence was always the contentious item and when that came down and the park is open to anybody, this has become the agreement.

D. Rivera stated that the Commission discussed last fall about not waiving fees except a select few; R. Myers stated that was correct. D. Rivera further inquired about not even voting on not charging the fees and charge the fees? R. Myers stated each time they have to go before the Mayor and Board of Alderman as only they can waive fees and they need a recommendation from this Commission. J. Baldi stated he feels the difference with this event is that it is open to the public where other fee waiver requests that were denied charged admission to their events. R. Myers stated they paid rental fees when the fence was in place and admission was charged. He further stated there are a couple long standing events that have a precedent set with them.

R. Knight inquired if the vendors/artists were paying a higher fee this year to participate. Mr. Butcher stated that the event is a \$115,000 festival and the fees have not been increased in the past three (3) years; however, there has been a decline in artists applying to participate which is indicative of the economy.

*Motion* by J. Grove to recommend to the Mayor and Board of Alderman to approve the request from the Frederick Arts Council as presented; both for alcohol and waiver of fees;

2<sup>nd</sup> by C. Effland

*Seven (7) in favor - one (1) abstain (Baldi).*

- 3. Request from HandsOn Frederick County to be allowed to serve alcohol on Carroll Creek Urban Park at their "Frederick County Earth Day Festival" to be held April 16, 2011. Ms. Tricia Thompson, Vice President of the Board of Directors; previously Volunteer Frederick offered that this event serves as a fundraiser for local non-profits working with the City to pick up trash and turn it into cash for the non-profits. This year is the first year for a celebration of this event and funds will benefit HandsOn Frederick County environmental youth programs.

J. Baldi inquired about logistics; where will the beer garden be in regards to all other activities? Mr. Mark Williams stated Flying Dog will be providing the beer and it will be set up in the amphitheater, similar to all other alcohol events along Carroll Creek. All other activities will take place across the creek, behind the library.

*Motion by C. Effland to recommend to the Mayor and Board of Alderman to approve a request from HandsOn Frederick County to serve alcohol at their Earth Day event;*

2<sup>nd</sup> by J. Myers

*ALL in favor.*

- 4. Request from Children's Festival Committee to support co-sponsorship and waiver of fees for Baker Park for their 22<sup>nd</sup> annual "Children Festival" to be held April 30, 2011. Ms. Shannon Aleshire of the Mental Health Association's Child Care Choices program. The City has always been a co-sponsor of the event to waive fees for both Baker Park and the William R. Talley Recreation Center gymnasium for this event. This is a free event and geared for children 2 to 8 years of age with emphasis on school readiness.

R. Myers offered for the new Commission members that when you see "co-sponsorship", that holds a lot of weight with the City. Any group that goes through the process to be co-sponsored by The City of Frederick basically says the City will waive fees.

*Motion* by J. Myers to recommend to the Mayor and Board of Alderman to approve a request from the Children's Festival Committee to waive fees for Baker Park and the William R. Talley Recreation Center gymnasium and to continue co-sponsorship of the "Children's Festival" event;

2<sup>nd</sup> by K. Wagester

*ALL in favor.*

- 5. Request from Downtown Frederick Partnership to (a) waive fees and (b) to be allowed to serve alcohol on Carroll Creek Urban Park for their "Alive @ 5", "The Great Frederick Float" and "August First Saturday - Dog Days of Summer" 2011 events. Ms. Marcia Hall, President of the Partnership asked to clarify that "The Great Frederick Float" event does not serve alcohol so that will only be a fee waiver request; all other events do serve alcohol. DFP did a market study on First Saturday events and found that the average number of people who attend these events is 11,000; however, the February Fire & Ice and August Dog Days of Summer events bring in a lot more. The DFP is a Main Street organization charged with administering the Main Street program for The City of Frederick. The designation comes to The City and they have to see that the program is carried out and have challenged DFP to raise more money and to do with less. They have not seen the FY12 budget for the City, but have always been support by an MOU (Memorandum Of Understanding) and they do anticipate a reduction in funds.

J. Grove stated in doing the math - looking at \$2,800 divided by 13 events is \$250 per event which means, when talking about waiving fees for three (3) events and charging for those that charge admission. When you break it down and hundreds coming to each event, there's still money to be made. Ms. Hall stated no admission is charged for The Great Frederick Float or First Saturday events. Alive @ 5 does have an admission charge and we have to factor in possible rained out events. The average number of attendees to an Alive @ 5 is 425 people.

R. Knight asked what the impact of attendees of the Alive @ 5 events has on downtown businesses. M. Hall stated it is significant and that's one of the reasons why they are held. They are mainly held to raise money for the DFP to do the work of the Partnership, to build on the

success of downtown as well. J. Baldi offered that the downtown has been very supportive of these events from its inception. M. Hall stated they are also working with businesses to extend their hours on Thursday's in conjunction with these events to possibly draw even more attendees.

J. Grove inquired that since the City helps to fund the Partnership, aren't we paying ourselves for the rentals? J. Baldi stated that was an interesting thought; however, the City is going to be cutting back on the Partnership's funding. M. Hall stated that last year their budget was cut by 25% and it will not be going back up any time soon. R. Myers offered that budget meetings with directors are being held with the Mayor and they are trying to make up a \$10 million dollar deficit which is huge. This is based on the current budget year which is \$3 to \$4 million dollars less than the previous year. He further stated that we still incur the same expenses; \$248,000 annually to maintain the finished section of the Carroll Creek Urban from Bentz Street to the Delaplaine. This includes electric, trash collection, fertilizer, fountains, irrigation contract, staff, plantings, etc. For example, the little dog waste bags that are provided in a total of ten (10) receptacles throughout the City, the bill on that alone is \$4,300 annually. There are so many little expenses that you don't think about. He continued that this is a tough decision because of the Main Street scenario.

*Motion* by J. Grove to recommend to the Mayor and Board of Alderman to approve a request from the Downtown Frederick Partnership to allow them to serve alcohol at their Alive @ 5 and August First Saturday Dog Days of Summer events at Carroll Creek Urban Park;

2<sup>nd</sup> by C. Effland

*ALL in favor.*

J. Baldi opened the discussion on a motion for the fee waiver request. D. Rivera feels the fees should not be waived for any of the events. Discussion continued for several financial options by the Commission members. C. Effland asked if a portion of the fees could be waived. R. Myers asked what the City gave DFP; M. Hall stated it was originally \$85,000 and then dropped to \$60,000 in FY11 which was a significant drop. She further stated that the Alive @ 5 events is their major fundraising events. With the cost of the band, with 350 people through the gate, they have covered the cost of the event. They don't always get to that amount every time, but there are times when they exceed this as well. An all time record in eight (8) years has been 800 and money is made on alcohol sales.

J. Baldi suggested a motion to pay for the original eight (8) dates and not for the additional five (5) dates as a compromise on the Alive @ 5 events.

*Motion* by K. Wagester to recommend to the Mayor and Board of Alderman to waive fees for five (5) of the Alive @ 5 events and charge fees for the original eight (8) events (total of 13 events) at Carroll Creek Urban Park;

2<sup>nd</sup> by C. Effland

*Four (4) in favor - three (3) opposed.*

*Motion* by J. Myers to recommend to the Mayor and Board of Alderman to waive fees for "The Great Frederick Float" and August First Saturday "Dog Days of Summer" events at Carroll Creek Urban Park;

2<sup>nd</sup> by R. Knight

*ALL in favor.*

C. Meierhoefer excused herself from the meeting at this time (7:55 p.m.).

Alderman O'Connor asked to speak at this time. He stated he kept quiet during these motions as he felt it was important that as a Commission that makes recommendations to the Mayor and Board of Alderman, you be allowed to have debate and discussion and make the decision you feel appropriate without the external influences. He felt that R. Myers offered a good overview of the City's budgetary situation at this time. The budget shortfall is currently between \$5 and \$10 million. Any decisions will be challenging in the future and historic actions may not happen currently. He suggested that the Commission should look at the Parks & Recreation Department fee structure with staff. The work of this Commission is difficult at times and it is appreciated.

- 6. Discussion of the use of Harry Grove Stadium for the Frederick American Legion and Frederick Babe Ruth teams.

R. Myers offered that some time ago there was a lot of discussion from the Commission about the use of Harry Grove Stadium by these baseball groups. Basically what was agreed upon was that the Legion would get ten (10) free dates at the stadium and Babe Ruth would get four (4) free dates at the stadium. This went well for a while until a contract negotiation changed so that the Keys did all their field maintenance themselves, which completely changed how rentals were scheduled and billed. You could rent the stadium through the City on non-game days; but the renegotiation created the Keys having the power to charge additional fees on non-games days over and above the City's rental fees. The fees could have been anything from clean up, security guards to bathroom fees to name a few. It was in their contract and they had a right to charge the fees, but ultimately what happened was it made the facility undesirable to outside rentals. Most renters would be very small with probably no more than 25 to 50 people present. In going into new lease negotiations with someone, the Commission should be aware of what has happened to date and get input on potential fees to be charged with the new renter. With larger events such as a concert, there is a reason to have additional fees due to the number of attendees and amenities available. Would like members to think about these issues and we will come back to discuss at a future meeting.

K. Winterstein offered that there have been no stadium rentals for at least one (1) years; and the parking lot rentals totaled \$4,400. R. Myers further offered that the Loats Foundation provided the property with the understanding that it be used for youth activities. This being done on the two (2) smaller fields outside the stadium, but not with the stadium itself at this time. There is concern that the goal of the Loats Foundation which requested use of the property as a whole for youth is not being met.

All Commission members felt the issues brought forward are worth of further discussion. R. Myers and K. Winterstein will provide historical information as well as current fee schedules to the members for their review.

Mr. Tom Conway of Frederick Babe Ruth and Mr. Tom Long of the Frederick American Legion are present.

Mr. Long stated that Grove used to be their home field from 2000 through 2004; then Comcast came into the picture and the Legion moved to McCurdy field as their home field. Looking to play two (2) games at Grove this year and he spoke with the Keys general manager who stated they would love to have them back. When we played there, we were responsible for cleanup. At the end of their event the parents and kids would clean up the stadium together prior to leaving.

Mr. Conway stated that Frederick Babe Ruth is the flagship of Frederick County Babe Ruth baseball. Everyone likes to come to the City and the kids love to play under the lights. To be able to play at Grove Stadium would be awesome and give the kids a great experience to end their season.

- 7. Open discussion regarding various issues of the Parade / Walk / Race events.

R. Myers stated the reason for this item was for Mark Lawrence to lead this discussion, but he is not present. However, City Police staff is here and we will discuss what we need to. R. Myers stated that a concern is that more of these types are being requested all the time and it's definitely taxing Police and Parks Division staff. There are a few approved race routes. Section 18-8 of the City Code addresses the issue that between the Police and Parks departments we can charge additional fees based on the cost to handle these individual events.

K. Winterstein offered that Application Fees are as follows: Parade = \$200; Race = \$100 and a Walk = \$50. R. Myers stated to date we have not added any additional charges to these events. The opinion is that we should start collecting additional fees where possible.

Lt. Jason Keckler, Commander and Sgt. Wade Brown of the Community Services Division of the City Police and this division handles all special events for the City, officers that work in schools as well as other responsibilities. In addition, they are responsible for other events such as these parade, walk, race events. The reality is that every weekend from late March through December is filled with these events. We are fortunate to have a wonderful auxiliary, volunteer officers that do not get paid and volunteer their time. Last year they volunteered over 7,000 hours of free time to the City which is about a \$240,000 savings. It was also a record year for events with them handling 111 events total; races, walks, parades, Office of Special Events, etc.

R. Myers stated that both the Police and Parks staff will be looking at establishing further fees for these types of events.



Meeting adjourned at 8:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kristi A. Winterstein

Commission Secretary